

MR. PARNELL.

MR. PARNELL'S death raises a pitiful and almost squalid personal squabble into the regions of tragedy. We do not envy the man who heard unmoved of the sudden ending of a career almost unique in the history of this country. Mr. Parnell had known many vicissitudes of fortune, but surely the sorest stroke of Fate has been that which was dealt last Tuesday, when he died in the midst of a hopeless struggle, fought on his side with an almost savage courage, his success in which would have meant the ruin of the cause to which he had devoted the best years of his life. Nothing sadder can be imagined than that his death should have been hailed as a blessing for the country he had served so well. And yet a blessing it is, and not even a disguised blessing. Oh, the pity of it, the pity of it! For our part we have no heart to dwell upon the events of the last twelve months, so far as they revealed the true character of the Irish leader. All Irishmen, we feel assured, will wish to blot from their minds those miserable memories. That some mysterious change, it may have been but the shifting of a "grey molecule" in that busy brain, had taken place within the man at the time of the stress and shame of the action in the Divorce Court, is not an improbable and is certainly not an uncharitable explanation of his sudden fall. He stood so high before; and he fell so low. But speculation on this point is useless now. Nothing can undo the effect of the line of action to which the Member for Cork committed himself last November, when he suddenly hurled his defiance against Mr. Gladstone, declared war upon the Liberal party, and broke up his own following in the House of Commons.

Upon the consequences of his death it is not too soon to speculate. There seems no reason to doubt that with his disappearance from the scene the last obstacle to the complete reunion of the Nationalist party in Ireland has been removed. Reunion, as a matter of fact, would have been secured sooner or later, even if he had lived. Despite the indomitable pluck with which for months past he has been fighting for his own hand, and the stubbornness with which he refused to admit, even to his closest friends, that defeat was possible, he was steadily losing ground week by week. The defection of the *Free-man's Journal* was a terrible blow, and in the case of any ordinary man would have been accepted as final. Yet other blows of the same kind would have fallen upon him if he had lived but a few days longer, for his followers clearly saw the truth to which he closed his eyes, and one by one they were seeking re-admittance to the fold from which, at his bidding, they had deserted. Still, it is not a slight gain to the cause of Irish freedom that the remaining obstacles to reunion have, in a moment, been cleared away, and that when the General Election comes, Mr. Parnell will no longer be a disturbing element in Irish politics. It is to be hoped that on both sides in Ireland there will be a disposition to forget and forgive all that has passed. Not a few of the men who clung to their old leader, even when he seemed bent upon undoing his own work, were animated by feelings which it is impossible not to respect. Their loyalty to the chief who had been their leader in the darkest days of their country's history had become a passion, which made them insensible or indifferent to all other considerations. Regard for a great principle was lost in devotion to a remarkable man. For these men, now that Mr. Parnell is gone, there should be no room for doubt as to their future action. Parnellism without Mr. Parnell is as impossible as Bonapartism

without a Napoleon; and we may confidently expect that the recognised followers of the Member for Cork in the House of Commons, and elsewhere, will henceforth be found acting in conjunction with the majority of the Irish representatives. Nor is it a small gain that the dangerous classes in Ireland, the "men of the hill-side," to whom Mr. Parnell openly beckoned, and whom he encouraged by speeches which seemed animated by the very spirit of recklessness, have now lost the one man who had the power of leading them and influencing them. The people of Ireland will, for the future, be able to carry on their pacific agitation for the right of self-government without the fear of a possible outbreak of criminal violence, which would in a moment have shattered their hopes.

It is ungracious, however, at present to dwell upon the advantages which must unquestionably accrue from Mr. Parnell's death to the Home Rule cause. It is a more pleasant task to recall some of his claims to the undying gratitude of his fellow-countrymen. Down to November of last year he presented to the world the spectacle of a man who was prepared to subordinate all personal interests and pleasures to the great cause to which he had devoted himself. If there came at last a test which was too severe, if a sacrifice which was beyond his strength was in the end demanded of him, Irishmen at least should not forget the long years of travail and endurance, in which for their sake he cheerfully bore the hatred and the calumnies of his opponents. No man can withhold from him a due meed of admiration when the prolonged agony of the forged letters is called to mind, and the heroic stoicism with which he bore that deadly and most malicious assault on the part of an unscrupulous adversary is remembered. Nor do we fear even now to repeat what we said many months ago in these pages, that down to the moment when his strength gave way, and the whole purpose of his life seemed in an instant to be changed, one of his most striking characteristics was the curious kind of magnanimity with which he treated even those of whose conduct he had the best reason to complain. How many men would have suffered all that he did at the hands of his assailants in the *Times*, and of such men as Pigott and his associates, without openly exulting over them when their plots had been brought to nought? That he should have borne misrepresentation and persecution so long in silence, should so long have foreborne to strike at his most venomous assailants, and in the end should himself have struck so venomously and savagely at those to whom he ought to have been bound by close ties of gratitude, must be recognised among those mysteries of life which in this world can never be explained. In future ages we doubt not the character of the man who died on Tuesday will puzzle historians and philosophers as much as to-day it puzzles his contemporaries. His coldness and his passion, his reserve and his almost brutal frankness, his stern reticence for years and his sudden revelation of the very depths of his heart, his subtlety and adroitness in Parliamentary warfare and his reckless unwisdom when fighting for his own hand in Ireland, his magnanimity and his meanness, his courage and his cowardice, will mystify those who seek to read the secret of his life, as much as will the hold which he, a Protestant, an aristocrat, and a landlord, succeeded in gaining over the hearts of the Irish peasantry. But whatever may be the truth about him, one fact at least remains clearly stamped upon the records of the present generation. He was a great man, who, before his fall, had accomplished great things on behalf of a great and holy cause.

"THE LOST LEADER."

THE original of Browning's "Lost Leader" was probably Wordsworth, whose ardent sympathies with the French Revolution were painfully and reluctantly alienated by the excesses which stained its later developments. That the Lost Leader was a poet seems evident from the lines—

"Shakspeare was of us, Milton was for us,
Burns, Shelley, were with us; they watch from their graves!
He alone breaks from the van and the freemen;
He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves!"
Songs may inspirit us—not from his lyre."

The only contemporary poet who could have been placed in such splendid company was Wordsworth. We do not say, nor do we think, that Browning's accusations against the Lost Leader are true of Wordsworth, though they came naturally from the pen of such a fiery and enthusiastic Liberal as Browning. For it was no mean motive that drove Wordsworth back from the hopes and aspirations which the French Revolution had engendered. It was the great crisis of his life and the severest wrench; and if he emerged from the ordeal with chastened feelings and less sanguine hopes for the amelioration of humanity, his moral integrity remained intact. It certainly was not true of him that the Laureate's "riband" and "handful of silver" tempted him to forsake the cause of which he had sung so sympathetically and hopefully.

Our present purpose, however, is not to discuss the identity of "The Lost Leader," or its applicability to Wordsworth, but to expose the absurdity of finding in the hero of Browning's poem, as political partisanship has lately pretended to do, a prototype of Mr. Gladstone. Browning's accusation against his Lost Leader is that he deserted his party for "a handful of silver" and "a riband to stick in his coat." How does that accusation fit the statesman who refused an earldom and has relinquished office for conscience' sake oftener than any public man of our time? It was not Mr. Gladstone who, as Prime Minister, bestowed the riband of the Garter on himself, or clutched at the handsome pension, though thrice within his reach, which other men needed more. And to accuse the man to whom every Italian attributes, next to Cavour, the liberation of Italy; the one foreigner whose name is revered throughout free Greece as her greatest benefactor; the one man to whom the emancipated provinces of Turkey turn with gratitude, and the enslaved populations with hope—to accuse such a man of "breaking from the van and the freemen," and "sinking to the rear and the slaves," is to forget or to maliciously invert the whole of his political career. The usual accusation against Mr. Gladstone is that he goes too fast for his followers, and is apt to lead them on forlorn hopes. The front of his offending, even on the Irish question, is that he precipitated the crisis and forced the consideration of Home Rule prematurely. "Deeds will be done while he boasts his quiescence—still bidding crouch whom the rest bade aspire." To what single act in Mr. Gladstone's public career can this apply? Twice he broke up his party to save the cause—in 1866 on the Reform question, in 1886 on the question of Home Rule. If he had wished for "quiescence" in 1886, he might have played Palmerston's rôle and secured himself in office for the rest of his life. His followers were numerically equal to the Tories and Parnellites combined, and when the inevitable collapse of the Tory Government took place and he was forced into office, he might have remained there indefinitely by a judicious employment of Fabian tactics. Instead

of that he chose to risk his past reputation and political future on the desperate venture of carrying the country with him in a final attempt to settle the Irish question. He knew that it was a desperate venture, and that the chances were about even whether he would succeed or be chased for ever out of public life. How does that accord with Browning's description of his Lost Leader?

But Mr. Gladstone's conduct on the Irish question is in strictest consistency with all the rest of his political life. On the threshold of his career he resigned office in obedience to what was thought at the time a quixotic homage to political honour. When Sir Robert Peel, in 1844, announced his intention to increase the Maynooth Grant, Mr. Gladstone left the Government because "he had a strong conviction that when a public man had changed his mind on a great constitutional question," he should give the public such a pledge of his sincerity as the sacrifice of office involves. Still believing the theory of Church and State, propounded in his treatise on the subject "to be the most salutary and the best in every condition of the public sentiment that will bear its application," he recognised that circumstances had made it obsolete. He "therefore held it to be his duty to apply his mind" to the consideration of the Established Church "free from any slavish regard to a mere phantom of consistency, and with the sole and single view of arriving at such a conclusion as, upon the whole, the interests of the country and the circumstances of the case might seem to demand." Having thus given the guarantee of good faith which resignation of office implied, Mr. Gladstone proposed to give Maynooth College a larger grant than that asked by Sir Robert Peel. Now let it be considered what resignation of office at that time meant for Mr. Gladstone. Sir Robert Peel's Government was the most powerful in numbers and talents combined that the country had seen for a long time; and it was engaged in financial and fiscal reforms in which Mr. Gladstone's was the mastermind, comparatively young as he then was. Resignation of office by a brilliant member of a Cabinet whose place cannot be adequately filled is never popular with a party or its chief; and the reason of Mr. Gladstone's resignation was of too refined and delicate a character to be generally appreciated. Yet he did not hesitate to damage his prospects seriously, rather than run the risk of lowering the standard of political honour. And where is there a trace of self-seeking in his attitude on the question of admitting the Jews to Parliament? The Bill for their admission was introduced into Parliament the first session after Mr. Gladstone's election for Oxford. The University petitioned against their admission, and Mr. Gladstone's colleague, Sir Harry Inglis, opposed the Bill. But Mr. Gladstone supported it, and justified his vote in a speech as liberal in sentiment as it was eloquent in expression. On that occasion he separated himself not only from the University which had trained him and had just sent him to represent them in Parliament, but from the whole of his party. Not long after we find him gallantly opposing not only his University; not only the great body of the clergy, on whose votes the retention of his Parliamentary seat depended; not only the Conservative party, to which he still belonged; but—what was still harder perhaps for a man of his popular sympathies—the clamorous voice of the masses. That was when he led a small band of Peelites and Radicals against the combined host of Tories and Whigs, led respectively by Lord John Russell and Mr. Disraeli, in resistance to the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill—an abortive measure which it fell to his own lot fifteen years afterwards to repeal, with universal approval. The No-Popery cry was then a

very formidable one, yet Mr. Gladstone deliberately braved it in defence of religious liberty. Speaking on behalf of himself and his "insignificant minority," he said:—"In our opposition to this Bill we are sustained by the conviction that we have right on our side, and we are determined to follow that bright star of justice beaming from the heavens whithersoever it may lead." Many of our readers will probably differ from Mr. Gladstone on his views on divorce; but those who differ from him most will be the first to admire his defiance of public opinion and disregard of his own political interests in the almost single-handed fight which he made against the Divorce Bill. He was ridiculed by Whigs and Tories as "a monk" who "had better retire into a convent." His opposition to the Public Worship Regulation Bill is another example of his chivalrous defence of the weak against a popular clamour. And what a contrast to the conduct of the Tory leaders is his on the question of Bradlaugh's admission to the House of Commons! They used Bradlaugh as a party weapon against Mr. Gladstone, and acquiesced in Mr. Bradlaugh's admission as soon as he had served their purpose. Mr. Gladstone, on the contrary, sustained defeat after defeat in the House of Commons, and lost votes by thousands in the constituencies, because loyalty to justice was dearer to him than place and power. And it is this man, whose whole life has been a splendid example of allegiance to truth and justice at the cost of whatever sacrifice, who is supposed by some to find his parallel in Browning's "Lost Leader"!

MR. SMITH.

THE genuine and widespread regret which has been displayed over the death of Mr. Smith is distinctly creditable to the nation as a whole. It shows how sound public sentiment is in certain matters. Mr. Smith was not a great man. He was no orator; he could not be called a brilliant debater; he was hardly a successful leader of the House of Commons. There was, apparently, nothing about him which was calculated to impress the popular imagination, or to give him that factitious reputation which is so dear to the politician. And yet, in spite of these serious drawbacks, he not only made his way from the comparative obscurity of the position of a private member to the leadership of the House, but gained so great a hold upon the esteem of his fellow-countrymen that his death is regarded in the light of a public calamity. More than a year ago we drew a sketch of Mr. Smith in these pages, and, looking back to what we then said, we find little to correct now that the close of his career makes the review of his life more complete. Two great qualities—not, happily, rare in our national character, but not the less valuable on that account—gave him his hold upon the esteem of his fellow-countrymen: these were his transparent honesty and his personal modesty. There are many men in Parliament and in public life who are not a bit less honest than Mr. Smith, who have nevertheless failed to gain credit for that quality with the public at large; and if we have to ask ourselves why it was that in this respect Mr. Smith was more fortunate, we find the answer to the question in that second characteristic of his of which we have spoken. Honest and sincere as he was, he never made any attempt to impress the fact upon those around him. Altogether too simple and modest to endeavour to thrust his own personality upon the public, he made all the deeper impression upon those associated with him for this very reason. This it is, we

think, which redounds so greatly to the credit of the English character. We are too often quick to take charlatans at their own valuation; yet when once we get a glimpse of a true man we never allow his own under-valuation of his character to weigh to his disadvantage in our judgment of him. On the contrary, the more modest he is the more highly he is esteemed by those who know him. When Mr. Smith first undertook the duties of leader of the House of Commons, there were many who smiled, anticipating a ridiculous fiasco; and, indeed, it was difficult to think of the worthy member for the Strand as filling the place held within the memory of living men by a Peel, a Palmerston, a Disraeli, and a Gladstone. It would have been very easy for Mr. Smith to justify the anticipations—not of his enemies, for we do not believe that he had one—but of the cynics who always look for failure in human effort. But he disappointed every foreboding, and came to be regarded in Parliament with the kind of confidence and affection which only a few men are able to inspire in that assembly, and which can never be won unless the fortunate person who secures this tribute is possessed of real and sterling virtues. Here again it was his own simplicity and modesty which secured for him his triumph. These qualities conciliated the most censorious of his opponents, subdued the bitter mood of angry rivals, and charmed even a tumultuous assembly.

Perhaps, too, the fact that he was one of the trading middle-class, that his natural sympathies were with his own order rather than with the landed aristocracy, the cultured classes, or the proletariat, did much to win for him the goodwill of an essentially middle-class House. Be this as it may, it is certain that Mr. Smith at the time of his death held a very enviable position in the political world. He had climbed to it by slow degrees, but he held it by no uncertain tenure. The very narrowness of his intellect harmonised with the average intelligence of the men around him; his prejudices and prepossessions were alike those of his associates, whilst his goodness was of that kind which is dearest to the hearts of Englishmen.

It is no common loss which has fallen upon the Tory party in the removal of such a man. The Ministry contains many able members, but it has no one who can fully replace Mr. Smith, whilst the party behind him will find it difficult to secure another leader in the House of Commons who combines in so rare a degree as he did the merits and qualities which are best calculated to win the confidence of Parliament. But we confess that it is not of the party loss alone that we think in reference to Mr. Smith's death. The country as a whole has reason to deplore the removal of a man who might justly be regarded as a typical representative of that middle-class from which he sprang, and of whose virtues and defects, generous aspirations and intellectual limitations, he was himself so striking an example. As Liberals, we confess that we cannot but deplore the evil fate which years ago lost to us the co-operation of such a man. We shall not insult the memory of Mr. Smith by suggesting that his failure to secure election to the Reform Club was the cause of his becoming a Conservative. It is absolutely certain that he was not one of those who could thus be influenced by a personal slight, but it has been our misfortune as a party that whilst he began life as a Liberal he ended it as a Tory. From first to last, however, there is no Liberal who will doubt that he was sincere in his beliefs, and that underlying any profession of party faith there was a strong attachment to his country and a real desire to promote her highest interests.

THE CURSE OF KINGSHIP.

KING CHARLES OF WÜRTENBERG died at five minutes to seven on Tuesday last. He was not, by a long way, the most despicable or unhappy of contemporary sovereigns. Yet the circumstances of his life and death were such as to excite aversion, not unmixed with pity, and to suggest the reflection that in these latter days Nature and Fate are in league to belittle the kingly office and convince mankind that it were well to end it, in very pity for the kings themselves.

In his youth, the career of King Charles gave promise of a not unhappy future. He was a man of fine intelligence, with a keen sympathy for the arts, and, above all, his nature was conspicuously free from that taint of militarism which in far better monarchs has often worked such woe among those whose tastes and fortunes it was in their power to shape. He never gushed about his brave grenadiers or his splendid horse-artillery; and, indeed, it is said that from the day he became his own master he never willingly donned the military garb. From childhood, however, he was of a sickly constitution. When he grew up, as the *Daily News* informs us, "he threw himself into a vortex of pleasures which did not remain without influence upon his constitution." His subsequent marriage was childless. For many years he remained under the government of his wise and masterful wife; and, at her prompting, he piloted the State through the perilous crisis which ended in the complete adhesion of the Suabians to the cause of United Germany. But the curse of kingship was upon him; and in due season he underwent that process of amatory rejuvenescence which Heaven has reserved as the direst chastisement of a mis-spent youth. His vagaries culminated in a scandalous entanglement with three American adventurers, euphemistically called "Spiritualists," who, under pretence of introducing him to the esoteric delights of hypnotism and occultism, played upon his follies, until at length the rage of his long-suffering subjects threatened to force him into abdication. At this crisis, his wife came forward to rescue him, drove forth the "Spiritualists," and made herself a surety to the Würtembergers for his future behaviour. Since then he has been practically a prisoner in his own palace, with his wife and Prime Minister as his jailers, cut off from every pleasure for which he cared, and with no prospect of release from his misery save death. "His wife and Ministers," says our well-informed contemporary, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, "have been" (since the expulsion of the Americans) "in constant fear of his escaping from Stuttgart, and going off to Paris in search of amusement, the probable result of which would be some frightful scandal or catastrophe."

And yet, as we have implied, King Charles of Würtemberg was by no means the most pitiable figure in the gallery of contemporary kings. Although a lifelong invalid, he lived and died with his faculties about him. Taking kings as a body, it is about seventy-three chances out of a hundred that a particular ruler is mad, like the Kings of Bavaria, or blind, like the late King of Hanover and the present Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, or stone-deaf, like the D'Orleans and the Danish Royal Family, or an epileptic, like the little King of Spain, or a man who lives to bury his heir in an unhonoured grave, like the Emperor of Austria or the late King of the Netherlands. If you are none of these, or possibly, in addition to one or more of these things, it is about even chances that, being a monarch, you will have an "impossible" kind of wife, like the ex-King of Servia, or the present King of Roumania, or the Emperor of Austria, who by her *bourgeois* jealousy

or her tantrums and vapours will deprive your life of all possibility of dignity and repose. Then, in addition to, or in substitution for all this, it is highly probable that if you reach the kingly rank, you will prove to be a physically and morally ridiculous person, notable for your obesity or your greed, with a tendency to get into ridiculous scrapes, which make you the laughing-stock of the universe. Take, for example in this connection, the last Duke of Tuscany of the Medici line, who became so dead to all pleasurable sensation, that he was driven to order for his delectation the concoction of a scent out of the most revolting of all animal substances, for it was by a whiff of this alone that he could become aroused to any perception of existence. Then, again, there is the example of Louis the Eighteenth in his latter days, when he had ceased to appreciate any food but potatoes prepared in a particular way by a *chef* who was, we are told, as fat as himself. One night, as was not unusual with him, he awoke in the small hours with the craving for the dish upon him, and, rising from his bed, he waddled off to the apartment of the *chef*, whom he aroused with a suggestion that he should then and there prepare the mess. The cook was nothing loth, for it was his master's gracious custom to allow him to share in the consumption of the delicacy at these nocturnal orgies. A dish of immense size was in due course prepared, and the king and the cook started fair, standing side by side, to consume it. "You'll kill yourself if you eat as fast as that," said the king, between two mouthfuls. But the cook did not take the warning, and in five minutes he fell back dead at the king's side. "There, I told him so!" ejaculated the king to the Lord Chamberlain, pointing at the corpse with his spoon, but never for a moment desisting from the feast, and not only consuming his own share, but also what had been left uneaten by the cook at the moment that he ceased to live. Many old gentlemen are greedy, but no one but a king could be as greedy as all this. In such instances as these, Nature appears to have been minded to test to the utmost the slavish docility of the old-world populations. She has even used women to complete her cynical jest at the expense of our Race. Many women have been sensual and abandoned, but no woman, not a crowned head, was ever so base, so shameless, and so cruel in her sins as Catherine the Second. As her soldier paramours left her apartment, the threshold was so contrived as to give beneath their weight and precipitate them into the waters of the Neva—the shriek of the dying wretch serving as a tonic to brace again the lady's somewhat unstrung nerves.

Another particular in which Fate and Nature have combined to make plain their hatred of kings is in this—that they so seldom allow a monarch to slip quietly and painlessly out of the scrape of being alive. A death-bed which, in an ordinary neighbourhood, would be regarded as an exceptional and mysterious visitation of Providence, is the common way in which kings make their exit from the world, as witness the death-beds of the Count of Chambord, the Kaiser Friedrich, the King of Holland, and the last King of Sweden. The latter example shows us, by the way, that Nature makes no exception even for the lines which are newly sprung from the people, and have won a Crown by their own strong arm. It is a peculiarity of the diseases of the palace that they are often those which we usually associate with overcrowding, bad food, bad air, and worse company. Many of the hereditary infirmities and taints, with which the reigning houses of the world are notoriously afflicted, are traceable to what is commonly regarded as the scourge fashioned by Providence to chastise the vices of the pavement. But even where there is no question of ancestral misconduct, the diseases of

the poor find no difficulty in breaking the perpetual quarantine which seems to surround a palace. A late Empress owed her death to an ailment which is almost wholly confined to the abjectly poor Jews of Eastern Europe. The hair became a matted and living organism, with a circulation and nervous network of its own; and she died, worn out by the torture and exhaustion resulting from this strange and dreadful burden.

Then, again, monarchs stand out conspicuous in their misery above all lesser men in their liability to murder. A king can never look upon a crowd without thinking that any of the myriad faces before him may be that of his destined executioner. This horror is the especial curse of absolute rulers. Sometimes it is by the hands of his own ministers and servants that such a man may know that he must meet his death. There are circumstances in which even a good minister will kill his master. This, however, and happily, is not necessary in constitutional countries. When King George III. went mad, all that the late Dr. Willis thought it needful to do was to hire six strong men to scourge him. Whenever his Majesty had a lucid interval it was carefully explained to him how he had been beaten, and he always expressed himself highly satisfied, and directed himself to be whipped again when he should become insane once more. But if George III. had been an absolute ruler like Tzar Paul or Sultan Abdul Assiz, Dr. Willis might have deemed it his duty to put an end to him, lest one of the six strong men should have got control over him and misused the kingly power for the undoing of the realm. The chance of assassination is, however, by no means confined to tyrants. Our own beloved sovereign has been five times in peril. The fact that Louis Philippe went about in omnibuses, with a gingham umbrella, and a fluffy white hat (all brushed the wrong way), did not avert the murderous fury of four political fanatics. The amiable weaknesses of Isabella might be supposed to have won her enough personal goodwill among the Spaniards to secure her from attack; but a man once tried to stab her while she was carrying a baby of hers to the baptismal font. Within eight years of the subjugation of France and the consolidation of the Fatherland, a German all but killed the Emperor William.

Let us be thankful that we are none of us kings!

OUR POSITION IN EGYPT.

WE do not propose to follow those rabid scribes, like Sir Lepel Griffin, who have plunged into angry disquisitions against Mr. Gladstone because in a few pregnant words at Newcastle he called the attention of his fellow-countrymen to the truth regarding our occupation of Egypt. We would rather rejoice that, speaking with an authority superior to that of any other member of the Liberal party, he should not have omitted the Egyptian Question from his recent survey of public affairs. There are certain facts connected with our occupation of that country to which, apparently, a portion of the public habitually shuts its eyes, yet they are facts which cannot be ignored without grave danger. Nothing can be more satisfactory to our national pride than the manner in which, under English auspices, civilisation is flourishing apace in the Delta of the Nile. It is delightful to think that we are in a measure accomplishing there the great work which we have already done in India, and the Chauvinist feeling which is strong in most men cannot but be stimulated by our knowledge of this fact. That we should scuttle out of Egypt

leaving our work undone, our pledges unfulfilled, is what no man amongst us can desire. But that we should stay there indefinitely in the hope that sooner or later Europe will be induced to acquiesce in the transformation of our present temporary occupancy of the country into a real and permanent conquest, is another thing, about which it is necessary that there should be very plain speaking on the part of Liberals at all events.

Fate may determine that Egypt shall be ours, that having established our soldiers in that country we shall never again withdraw them from it; but if that is to be the case, it is to be hoped that the furious Jingo who reproach Mr. Gladstone for having ventured to touch upon the question at all, will bear one fact at least in mind. That is, that we are pledged in honour to leave the country as soon as our work there is done, and that the only honourable manner—using the word honourable in the conventional sense—in which we can evade that pledge is by asserting our right to do so by the sword. If we are prepared frankly to face Europe and say, "We withdraw from our promise to quit Egyptian territory, and are prepared to abide the consequences," we may then satisfy at once our own sense of honour and our national covetousness. But in that case we must be prepared to assert our right to Egypt at the point of the sword—in other words, we must go to war with France in order to cover our retreat from our own pledges. We should be glad to know if there is a single Jingo in Great Britain who would seriously maintain that our occupancy of Egypt could, under any circumstances, be worth the price of such a war. This is one of the questions which the people who gird at Mr. Gladstone for having called attention to the embarrassments and difficulties in which the occupation of Egypt involves us, persistently ignore. Yet it is one which they would quickly have to face if our future policy were to be decided according to their wishes.

We are told by those who snatch at any excuse for putting off that which they regard as an evil day, that our honour is just as much pledged to the Egyptian fellaheen as it is to the French Government, and that we can no more leave Egypt to become a prey to the old disorders than we can take forcible possession of it as a portion of our own Empire. To that statement we do not demur; but nothing could be more disingenuous than to make use of this fact in order to evade our own obligations to Europe. We have a right to insist that so long as we continue to strengthen Egypt in its preparation for the task of self-government we shall not be interfered with by the other Powers who thrust that duty upon us at the time of the bombardment of Alexandria. But on their part they have a right to insist that our duty to the fellaheen shall not be made a pretext for an indefinite prolongation of the occupation. There is, indeed, something almost incredibly mean in the proposal that we should try to shirk the fair issue which would be raised by our deliberate renunciation of the pledges we have given, by a resort to a paltry system of equivocation such as that which seems to find favour at present in some quarters.

It is when we come to look to the substantial advantages which are likely to accrue to us from an occupation, or even from the annexation, of Egypt, that we see the suicidal folly of the policy which our Jingoism are bent on urging upon us. What British interest is really at stake in Egypt? We have already discussed the question of the supposed importance of the Suez Canal in case of war, and need not further refer to it. We hold India, happily, upon a tenure which cannot be threatened by any event